

I. Israel's Promise. The Israelites are once more assembled on the plain at the foot of Mount Sinai. They look up to the holy cliff with deep solemnity and reverence. No dark cloud is seen: no fire, no thunder nor lightning. No awful tempest sound is heard. Quietly the people gather in the plain: and very early in the morning Moses erects an altar to God and sets up twelve pillars, representing the twelve tribes of Israel.

Then sacrifices are offered. Half of the blood of the slain oxen is sprinkled on the altar, and half collected in basins. That sprinkled blood would recall to their minds the last night in Egypt, when God had so mercifully protected them. His power had been exerted on their behalf, His goodness had saved them from the hands of their enemies. No wonder that they accepted His law and joined in the covenant proposed.

But many other rules have been given, Moses reads these from a roll of parchment, and asks the people whether they will keep these Commandments? One answer bursts from every lip—"All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." But alas! they broke the law many, many times. They promised wisely and well, but in fulfilment they grievously failed. One thing they had forgotten. We shall see what it was.

II. Jehovah's Provision. Bear in mind that the blessings promised to Israel did not altogether depend on their observance of the Law. If so, very soon all would have been lost. Shortly after Moses had been commissioned to lead the people of Israel from Egypt, God had distinctly said that He would make a covenant with them and give them the land of Canaan (Exodus vi. 4). That covenant must be kept. God's promises are never broken (Ps. lxxxix. 34). The blood sprinkled that day on the altar showed that death for sin had taken place. And now, having made a solemn promise before God, the rest of the blood—called "the blood of the covenant"—is sprinkled upon the people (verse 8).

What did this signify? The first act showed that God had taken a guilty nation, a sinful people, to be His own chosen people,—that their sins were laid on another. The second sprinkling showed that this nation was His,—bound to keep His laws, bound to serve Him, and that when they failed, when their promises were broken, all failure, all sin would be forgiven, because of the sprinkled blood.

See how it acts already! On that dread day when Moses was commanded to ascend Sinai to receive the law, none dare touch the mountain, but now many go up, at God's command, and without fear and trembling. They see the glory of God (verse 10).

What makes the difference? The sprinkled blood. They are not shut out from God's presence. Fear has fled because of the covenant. God has made the way open. They had promised to keep this law. But could they do so? Could they approach His presence until He made a passage for them to do so? No! They could never keep the commands of God until He bestowed on them power and strength to walk uprightly. This is what they had forgotten. David knew this when he said, "I will run the way of Thy Commandments when Thou enlarge my heart" (Ps. cxix. 32).

Family Reading.

GOD LOOKS AT THE HEART.

They who busy themselves with many outward works of charity, and engage heartily, it may be, in some "philanthropic cause," without active love to Christ, without being at one with him, without seeking his presence and spending time with him, are wanting in the very essence and stamina of Christian charity, they are wanting root to live on; and it would be well if they seriously examined their hearts to see if there be selfish motive—some inducement that has self in view, such as the desire to be thought well of by their fellow creatures and the acquiring influence over others; a restlessness of mind which, by doing something for others, satisfies for a time and quiets it. Good works are in themselves ever to be commended, but God looks at the heart, and sees why we do them. And those persons are most pleasing to Him who, out of pure love to Jesus our Lord, are sweetly constrained for his sake to succor all that are in distress, in need, sickness, or any other adversity, as far as they can, and say nothing about it to themselves. For is it not the peculiar nature and excellence of Christian character to feel, when we have done all that is in our power to do, that we are still unprofitable servants, and, consequently, should greatly shrink from making our charitable actions known.—*Thomas à Kempis.*

HINTS TO HOUSEKEEPERS.

MORTAR and paint may be removed from window glass with hot, sharp vinegar.

WHITEWASH for out-of-door purposes to stand the weather: For one barrel of wash, take half a bushel of white lime, three pecks hydraulic cement, ten pounds umber, ten pounds ochre, one pound Venetian red, one-fourth pound lampblack. Slake the lime, cut the lampblack with vinegar; mix well together; add the cement and fill the barrel with water. Let it stand twelve hours before using, and stir frequently while putting it on.

BEEFSTEAK PIE.—Select flank or rump steak for this dish. Cut the meat in two-inch pieces about an inch wide; season them with salt, white pepper, and minced parsley; dredge with flour. Wash, peel, and cut in long, thin pieces half the quantity of potatoes. Line a baking-dish with paste; add one long, thin strip of bacon, then the steak alternated with layers of the potato; add gravy or broth enough to keep the contents moist; cover with a top crust, brush a little egg over it, and bake until quite brown on top.

HOW TO MAKE GOOD TEA. Three things are essential; good tea, a good tea-pot, and boiling soft water. The best tea-pot is a silver one of good thickness; earthenware cools more rapidly; but whatever the kind, see that it is dry and scrupulously clean—not a vestige of an old leaf inside. Make it thoroughly warm before you begin. And preserving the aroma of the tea is another of the great points. If you cannot get soft water, do not despise an infinitesimal portion of soda. Be sure the water boils so that the steam comes well out of the kettle, and never boil it up twice. Measure the tea into a cup; a spoonful for each person and one for the pot is an old-fashioned but sensible reckoning. Open the lid quickly and slip the tea in, pour on sufficient water to well cover it, and close the lid; by this means the tea-pot does not cool as it would if you measured each spoonful separately into it. Let it stand four minutes, add enough water for the cups required, and in five minutes more pour out a little in each cup all around till all are filled and equally strong, then add more water for a second cup. If allowed to infuse too long, it is well-nigh poisonous; if it cannot be drunk at once, it should be drained off from the leaves into another tea-pot.

HUMANITY NOT CHRISTIANITY.

"That man has given more to the poor than any man in the town; now that's what I call a noble Christian," is the remark a friend made a few days ago. This is also a sample of the opinion of quite a large class of people; they hold that because a man is benevolent he must naturally be a Christian, but this does not necessarily follow. A man may love the poor, sympathize with those in distress and in the fulness of his heart relieve the wants of the pauper, and yet not be a Christian. He gives for humanity's sake, while the Christian gives for Christ's sake. Humanity must not be mistaken for Christianity. Many noted highwaymen have given largely to the poor out of what they robbed from the rich. That they possessed humanity no one will doubt, but there was not a particle of Christianity about them. The virtue in humanity's gift lies in the amount given, but the test in Christianity's gift lies in the amount left behind; and while humanity rejoices in having given so much, Christianity will weep because she has no more to give. The gift for humanity's sake is good, but to give for Christ's sake is better. The Pharisee who ostentatiously cast in of his abundance pales into insignificance before the poor widow who cast in her all.

Says Christ, "For the poor have ye always with you, but me ye have not always." Christ first, the poor afterward. Had Mary given the money to the poor, she would have done well, but in that she gave it to Christ, she did better. Had she given for humanity's sake, three hundred souls would each have the temporal satisfaction of a penny-

worth of bread: but in that she did it for Christ's sake, millions have been cheered and encouraged while reading of her devotion and tenderness to Christ. This is all expressed by Paul in a single sentence, "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, . . . and have not charity, I am nothing." To feed the poor is humanity, but charity is Christianity. Humanity is transitory and passes away. Christianity is eternity, and, like a river, is continually fed by countless tiny tributaries that, however small and powerless in themselves, all combine to form one golden current that flows into a far more exceeding and eternal sea of glory.

BEGIN WHERE YOU ARE.

The man who has really resolved to live the best life that he can, must begin right where he is—begin where his failures, his false education, his errors, and his sins have left him. By no single stroke of the pen can we erase whole pages in the history of our lives. We have made or unmade ourselves as we are. If we could only begin at some lofty height which our moral dreams picture for us, it seems to us that there would be inspiration in going still further; but we cannot substitute in a moment the dream-life for the real one. We are surrounded on every side by hard and tangible realities. We must begin where we are.

One who takes a practical and sagacious view of what is possible to him in life, will not burden himself by attempting the unattainable. He will begin when and where he is, and do that which lies in his power. Every day of life brings its own task; each task is an opportunity; each task accepted, each opportunity fulfilled, may be a step toward a higher life.

A BEAUTIFUL PRAYER.

In the written life of Frances Ridley Havergal there is mention made of a brief, beautiful prayer: "Prepare me, O God, for what Thou art preparing for me." It is recorded as having been taught her by her mother when the latter knew that the little one at her side was soon to be motherless, but to which of us, and at what stage of our earthly existence, would it not prove equally appropriate?

How little can we know, through all the veiled and often puzzling experiences of childhood and early youth, what the future may hold in store for us, what may be the appointed lot, career, or special sphere of duty awaiting us. How little did the sweet-voiced shepherd lad of Israel imagine the glorious destiny for which he was assigned; how little the pure souled maiden of Judah dream of the divine mission awaiting her. Yet can we not readily believe the devout aspiration of each unconsciously, but fervently, breathed the prayer, "Prepare me, O God, for what thou art preparing for me."

Let us make it, then, our own constant petition, and if offered in sincerity, surely we may then with restful confidence leave to His control every changing circumstance, every joy or sorrow of daily life; each and all will then appear but a part of that needful preparation. No high destiny, no world-renowned mission may perhaps be awaiting us; but who can know with what rapidity may be approaching that greatest of all events, that most wonderful of all changes in existence—the entrance upon life eternal. This, of a surety, God is preparing for each and all; then have we not indeed need to ask, that He will prepare us for it!—*Young Churchman.*

PALATABLE AND WHOLESOME.

Much time and money have been expended in the endeavour to produce flour retaining the life-giving and nutritive elements of wheat, nearly free as practicable from starch, and entirely without bran. Such preparations—called Gluten Flour, a special Diabetic food—have been secured by Farwell, Rhines, of Watertown, N. Y. They are of special value as food for Diabetics and dyspeptics, and sufferers from Nervous Debility. See their advertisement in our columns.